

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-07 AID-05 COME-00
INT-05 /083 W
-----060614Z 016789 /10

R 051414Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1634
INFO USLO PEKING

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, CH, AU
SUBJECT: SINO-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS

REF: VIENNA 1020

1. AT THE LONG STANDING INVITATION OF AUSTRIAN TRADE MINISTER STARIBACHER, A PRC DELEGATION LED BY DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER YAO I-LIN VISITED AUSTRIA FROM APRIL 26 TO MAY 2. IT WAS THE FIRST HIGH LEVEL PRC DELEGATION TO VISIT AUSTRIA SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN 1972, AND EXCEPT FOR A BRIEF, UNPRODUCTIVE MEETING OF THE AUSTRO-SINO MIXED TRADE COMMISSION (SEE REFTEL), THE FIRST OFFICIAL PRC VISIT OF ANY KIND. THE DATE FOR THE VISIT WAS PICKED BY THE CHINESE. THE GROUP WAS RECEIVED WITH FULL GOA CORDIALITY INCLUDING MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT KIRSCHLAGER, CHANCELLOR KREISKY, FOREIGN MINISTER PAAR AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT SALLINGER, AS WELL AS THE TRADE MINISTER. IN WIDELY PUBLICIZED, SEPARATE PRESS INTERVIEWS, BOTH MINISTER STARIBACHER AND I-LIN EXPRESSED FIRM
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CONVICTIONS THAT MUTUAL TRADE CAN BE INTENSIFIED SINCE BOTH SIDES WISHED THIS TO HAPPEN. FYI: IN 1976 AUSTRIAN IMPORTS FROM THE PRC AMOUNTED TO AS 331.2 MILLION (ABOUT \$18.5 MILLION) AND WERE 43 PER CENT HIGHER THAN IN 1975. AUSTRIAN EXPORTS TO PRC IN THE SAME PERIOD DROPPED BY 48 PER CENT TO AS 268 MILLION. DESPITE SOME ERRATIC SHIFTS

AUSTRO-SINO TRADE ALWAYS HAS BEEN VERY SMALL.

2. IN HIS COMMENTS TO THE PRESS, STARIBACHER SAID THAT THE CHINESE VISITORS ATTRIBUTED THE DROP IN AUSTRIAN EXPORTS LAST YEAR TO INTERNAL POLITICAL CHANGES IN THE PRC. THE NEW FIVE YEAR PLAN AND PROSPECTIVE PLAN FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS TO BE COMPLETED THIS FALL OFFER NEW OPPORTUNITIES. STARIBACHER ALSO SAID THAT AUSTRIA COULD CONTRIBUTE TO CHINA'S INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PRIMARILY BY SUPPLYING TURNKEY PROJECTS.

3. DURING THE VISIT A CONTRACT FOR HIGH GRADE AUSTRIAN STEEL WAS SIGNED. REPORTEDLY, THE PRICE CONDITIONS WERE UNFAVORABLE BUT WERE ACCEPTED TO HELP MAINTAIN JOBS IN A WEAKER SECTOR OF THE AUSTRIAN ECONOMY. ADDITIONAL STEEL AND RAYON STAPLE FIBER SALES ARE UNDER NEGOTIATION.MEEHAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, VISITS, MEETINGS, MEETING REPORTS, TRADE AGREEMENTS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977VIENNA03645
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770159-0245
Format: TEL
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770588/aaaacxwn.tel
Line Count: 80
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5dd08a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 VIENNA 1020
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2622798
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SINO-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS
TAGS: ETRD, CH, AU, (YAO I-LIN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5dd08a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009